



The Insider

www.senate.mi.gov/switalski

Inside State Politics with State Senator Mickey Switalski Senate District 10

August 5, 2005

Welcome to the electronic version of *The Insider*. I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your support and for giving me an opportunity to represent you in the Michigan Senate. It is my sincere hope that this bi-weekly e-newsletter will keep you informed of the happenings in Lansing while staying true to the traditional style of *The Insider*. If you would like to contact me, please feel free to e-mail me at senmswitalski@senate.michigan.gov or call me at my Roseville or Lansing office. You can also meet me in person during my constituent hours, coming to a library near you. Call my office and make an appointment or just walk in. See schedule for details.

Mickey's Letter Bag: Item Pricing

Dear Senator,

I agree that the pricing stickers should not be removed from products in stores. Many stores do not follow this law now. What would happen if the law was further relaxed? The public should be protected. It is very frustrating when prices are not shown.

Also, the scanner law is sidestepped in a lot of cases. Stores say they do not have to follow if a product is on sale. I called the attorney general and this is not true. If a scanner gives you a price and it is wrong then the scanner law applies.

Sincerely,
Diana Irons
Clinton Township

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Dear Senator:

I am writing in response to the Item Pricing Law changes that the Legislature wants to put forward. I only wish they would spend time on things that are worth spending time on. This is not one of them.

We have much bigger problems to worry about but we are going to spend our tax dollars and time on this one? What is wrong with the law to begin with? Just another thing to make it less convenient for the consumer. Why would I want to shop at a store that doesn't put the prices on their products? I would be very frustrated with trying to remember the prices or, like you said, carrying around little slips that show the price of the product from a price scanner. Then, if you don't remember the price and didn't get a slip from the price scanner, you would have to go back to the aisle and double check the price to make sure they weren't hitting you with a higher price than what it should be, and hopefully your not already

in the checkout line and notice a price scanned higher than what you thought it should be. Now they need to do a price check and everyone in line behind you are getting impatient, we all know about those price checks. No thanks.

Let's worry about things like pedophiles who get out early for good behavior. There shouldn't be such a thing. Let's worry about the elderly who can't pay for their own medicine because they have to eat. That is worth spending our time on and our tax dollars. I would like to know who put this idea forward and I would also like to know who actually thought twice about it.

Thanks for listening,

Kelly Senese
Roseville

I agree with almost everything you say, but just one slight correction. No sex offenders or any other prisoners get out early for good behavior. When the truth in sentencing law was passed, it mandated that all prisoners serve at least their minimum sentence. No one gets out before they serve their minimum. Mickey

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Dear Senator Switalski,

Concerning House Bill 4636, I shop at Costco & Sam's and neither place has price stickers on their items and it doesn't stop people from buying. I also used to work at a supermarket (in the Stone Age) as a stock person and it would save a lot of hours if they did not have to put stickers on everything. Also, what about items that go on sale? The price would have to be changed to reflect the sale - more hours. As a matter of routine, I always check my receipt for accuracy, after all, it's my money that is at stake. I have also found mistakes and the store has always been courteous enough to refund the difference and the \$5, even after I had taken the item home. Somehow, I thought that the age of computers was supposed to simplify things and use less paper, but some still want to stay in the 19th century.

Charlie Albright
Utica

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Dear Senator Switalski:

I am vehemently opposed to any changes to the scanner law, if this is what this bill is indirectly attempting to achieve. The Scanner law protects consumers against companies/businesses that overcharge, and ensures compliance via the cash bonuses. Any changes in this law are only to make it more difficult for the average consumer to shop and prevent being overcharged and favors businesses, especially big business.

I hope you oppose this bill, and encourage your friends in the Senate to follow suit.

Cordially,

Karen M. Antila
Sterling Heights

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Dear Senator Switalski,

I don't think that House Bill 4636 is as bad as you make it out to be. The part that requires electronic price checkers sounds good to me since the price shown on the checker comes from the same place that the cash register gets its price.

By the way, I think you meant to say "rendering this point moot." Thanks for the informative newsletters.

Tony Savant
Clinton Township

Oooops! Thanks for the correction. I plead guilty, or maybe I should just stand mute. Mickey

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Dear Senator:
DO NOT CHANGE THE LAW! It's not rigorously enforced enough now. Some items are so high on shelves that the price sign under them is unreadable (and I'm 5'5") without a step ladder.

Susan Westlake
Clinton Township

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Dear Senator Switalski:

This household does not want to do away with the item pricing. Please do everything you can do to prevent House Bill 4636 from becoming law. It is frustrating when visiting other states and always trying to keep prices straight, especially at the grocery stores. We already find many mistakes at the checkout even with item pricing. 98% correct isn't good enough.

Thank you,

Estella and William Stickle
Sterling Heights

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Senator Switalski,

I completely agree with you about the item pricing issue. It's very frustrating to pick up an item and not have any idea how much it costs. One of the worst offenders is Home Depot. 50% of the time I shop there, not even the bins or racks are labeled with the prices. Meijer's provides in-store scanners that are almost impossible to find or don't work when you find them. Keep the law the way it is!

Sincerely,
Joseph W. Frank
Roseville

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Thanks to everyone who wrote in regarding potential changes to the item pricing law. As you can read from the many e-mails, the item pricing law is a passionate issue that solicits much strong reaction, especially from consumers who rely on the law for protection from being overcharged. Proposed changes to such laws must be considered carefully and I believe that after careful scrutiny, the current item pricing law works and serves as a valuable tool for consumers. Mickey

What do you think? Securitization of Tobacco Settlement Funds

There has been much discussion among the Michigan Legislature on trying to find ways to improve Michigan's lagging economy. Many differing proposals have been suggested and negotiations are currently under way to come up with a common plan to stimulate Michigan's economy.

Much of the discussions have centered on a proposal to sell a portion of the state's tobacco settlement money in order to get a significant up-front lump sum payment. This up-front money would be used to help diversify the state's economy and to possibly fund business tax cuts and secure funding for the Michigan Merit Award Scholarships.

Securitization, as the proposal is known as, has been described as similar to a lottery payout, where a winner can either take the money up front or take smaller payments over a period of time that amounts to a larger sum. What do you think about the proposal to securitize a portion of the state's tobacco settlement money? Let me know what you think and I will publish some of your e-mails in the next issue of the *Insider E-Newsletter*. I have some misgivings about securitization that I will share in the next newsletter.

Mickey's TV Insider Show

Check out my TV Insider Show coming to a television station near you. Watch me interview local guests about politics, life, issues and concerns to our district.

Sterling Heights

Every Saturday and Sunday at 12:30 p.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Utica

Every Wednesday at 9 a.m.
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Clinton Township

Last week of every month- Sat thru Thurs
(Comcast Channel 5/WOW Channel 10)

Roseville

Various Times
(Comcast Channel 18)

*Please note that Sterling Heights/Utica/Clinton Township will show the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 5 and Wide Open West Channel 10. Clinton Township will air the TV Insider Show at various times during the last week of every month. Roseville can see the TV Insider Show on Comcast Channel 18.

Coffee Hours

*Please note that since the District Office is in Roseville, I do not have set coffee hours in Roseville. However, I encourage you to visit the Roseville office. We even have a coffee pot. Everyone is welcome to attend the coffee hours and discuss their issues and concerns.

September 26 7-9 p.m. Location: Clinton-Macomb Public Library (40900 Romeo Plank, south of Canal Road) Clinton Township	October 3 7-9 p.m. Location: Sterling Heights Public Library (40255 Dodge Park) Sterling Heights
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